



Parent Handbook

2010 - 11

HOUSTON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

PARENT HANDBOOK

“Setting the standard in child education”

Mission Statement:

At Houston Early Childhood Development Academy, our goal is to give each child a warm environment that encourages the development of academic skills, socialization skills, independence, and a positive self-image. Our experienced teaching staff embraces the philosophy that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of social, physical, and intellectual development. Our teachers demonstrate their respect for children by encouraging them to think for themselves, to make decisions, to work towards their own solutions, and express their own ideas and feelings. We recognize and foster an active partnership between home and school, parents and educators. Our programs are based upon the principles of developmentally appropriate activities and instruction.

HECDA provides care for:

Infants	6 weeks to 23 months
Toddler 2	24 months to 35 months
Pre-K 3	3 years (must be potty trained)
Pre-K 4	4 years
After School	Ages 5 to 12

Enrollment Process:

Parents may obtain a child enrollment packet from the HECDA administration office. The enrollment packet includes a registration form, authorized caregiver form, tuition agreement, a health statement and current immunization record, emergency care & medical release form, infant feeding schedule (if applicable), transportation form (if applicable), and field trip permission form. Parents must also supply current photos of each child and each person that will be authorized to drop-off or pick-up the child, including the parent. Children will not be accepted to HECDA without the required documents and photos. HECDA will require updated and current information from the parent, as requested. ***All AUTHORIZED persons approved by the parent to pick-up and drop-off their child must have a CURRENT and VALID photo identification on file at HECDA and must present the photo identification at the time of pick-up and drop-off.***

Parents are required to have a pre-enrollment conference with the Executive Director or General Manager prior to the child's first day of enrollment. During the pre-enrollment conference, parents are encouraged to share information about their child, voice their expectations of the program and ask questions about our policies and procedures. Parents should bring their child, as it will give the child an opportunity to meet the teachers and become familiar with HECDA prior to the first day of attendance.

It is the responsibility of the parent to report to the HECDA administration office any change of address, telephone numbers (home or work), employment, emergency contact person, authorized caregivers and medical information. HECDA reserves the right to request updated and accurate information on all children. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the suspension or dismissal of the child or children.

Hours of Operation:

HECDA's normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 5:30am to 7:30pm. Our facility operates for all twelve months of the year, and includes summer programs. Parents of children remaining at HECDA after 7:30pm will be charged a fee of \$20.00 for the first half-hour and \$1.00 per minute thereafter.

Holidays Observed:

New Years Eve & Day	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day (observed)	Good Friday	Labor Day
Memorial Day	July 4 th		
Christmas Eve & Day	Thanksgiving & Friday after		

Occasionally, when holidays occur during the week, the center may be closed an extra day. A minimum of two weeks notice will be given to parents/caregivers.

Tuition & Fees:

Tuition is calculated per the HECDA tuition/fee schedule and payment agreement. There is a \$100.00 registration fee for the first child, \$50.00 for the second child; \$250.00 maximum per family. At the time of enrollment, parents are required to sign the tuition agreement, pay the registration fee and one (1) week tuition in advance. ***The registration fee and first week of tuition are non-refundable.*** The registration fee/tuition will also serve as a security deposit to secure a child's space in a classroom for minimum of one (1) week from the child's anticipated start date. At the end of the week, the child will need to have started at HECDA, or another week of tuition is due. The space is forfeited if the financial obligation is not met. A 10% discount on the lesser amount is available for families with more than one child enrolled at HECDA.

HECDA does not accept cash. Payments must be made via check, credit card, money order(s) or electronic bank draft through Tuition Express.

Each child's tuition is paid on pre-paid weekly basis. ALL TUITION MUST BE PAID ON MONDAY, BEFORE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, OF THE WEEK IT IS DUE. A \$35.00 late fee will be added to any tuition paid after close of business Monday. Children with tuition and late fees not paid in full by close of business Tuesday will not be admitted to HECDA on Wednesday or until payment in full is received. A \$35.00 NSF or Chargeback fee will be charged for credit cards or electronic bank drafts that are returned unpaid by your financial institution. If this should occur, you will be notified, and payment must be remitted via certified funds immediately. If there is a second incident of NSF or chargeback from your financial institution, all future payments must be remitted via certified funds.

All weekly tuition fees must be paid whether or not the child is in attendance. If a parent/guardian fails to give notification of absences, a child's enrollment is terminated after an absence of one week. Should the child's enrollment be terminated due to non-attendance, the child must be re-enrolled before returning to H.E.C.D.A. and all registration & tuition fees are applicable.

Each family receives one (1) vacation week per school year (August through May). The week must be taken in a block (one full week), and two weeks advance notice in writing must be provided. The free vacation week is only available for use during the school year, August through May, and is only offered to families with children who are enrolled full-time.

Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. A non-refundable \$45 per week holding fee will be applied if attendance will not begin immediately within the week the family registers. Additionally, if a family takes a leave of absence for two or more weeks, beyond the one vacation week per year, or for the entire summer term, a holding fee of \$45 per week will be charged. Two weeks advance notice in writing is required for all leaves of absence. When the holding fee is charged, discounts (i.e.: multi-family) do not apply. The \$45 holding fee must be paid in-advance and is due on Monday of every week. If the \$45 holding fee is not paid, the child's enrollment will be terminated and the child must be re-enrolled before

returning to HECDA, and all registration & tuition fees are applicable.

HECDA reserves the right to dismiss a child if the tuition obligation is not fulfilled.

A \$50.00 Arts & Crafts fee is due annually and at the time of enrollment. The Arts & Crafts fee and curriculum fee will be automatically billed to all accounts on August 1st of each year. Additional fees may apply for field trips and other activities.

HECDA accepts financial assistance from NCI. The parent portion of the tuition balance that is not covered by NCI is due weekly, every Monday before close of business. A \$35 late fee will be charged after close of business Monday. Children with tuition and late fees not paid in full by close of business Tuesday will not be admitted to HECDA on Wednesday or until payment in full is received.

Uniforms:

Toddler 2, Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 children are required to wear the red HECDA polo shirt with Navy Blue pants, shorts, or skorts Monday – Thursday, and the HECDA T-shirt with denim pants or shorts on Fridays. All pants and shorts must be hemmed, no cut-offs. Boys should wear a brown or black belt and black socks. Girls should wear white socks. Children must wear closed-toe shoes or tennis sneakers. HECDA T-shirts are required for summer programs and field trips. **Students that arrive without a uniform shirt will have the cost of a shirt billed to their account. Students that arrive without the uniform bottom will be charged a \$10 uniform violation fee.**

Curriculum:

HECDA is committed to helping Toddlers and Pre-K children develop and learn in a fun, loving, and nurturing environment. Our teaching methods are based on the *A Beka* curriculum. Our philosophy is that each child is unique and should be free to mature intellectually, socially, physically and emotionally to their fullest potential. The *A Beka* curriculum supports this philosophy by providing learning programs that are designed to provide a positive experience to build each child's self-esteem, educational development and social skills. The tools learned at HECDA will help build the solid foundation of a child's life.

Our infant's day is filled with activities rich in language, movement, and sensory adventures, which support his/her enthusiasm for interacting, exploring, and discovering. Reading begins with the youngest of infants as the children experience the joy, magic, and wonder of sharing a book in the arms of a trusted teacher.

Our after-school children are offered one-on-one tutoring and homework help to assist each child in achieving academic success. Computer learning and assistance is available.

Arrival/Departure Procedures:

On arrival, all children will be welcomed by a staff member and parents will be required to sign their child or children in. On departure parents must ensure that a member of staff is informed that they are collecting their child and will again be required to sign their child or children out before leaving the building.

Children will not be allowed to leave HECDA with anyone other than a designated person or their parent or caregiver.

Should a parent wish their child to be collected by someone else - we ask parents to notify HECDA in advance. Additionally, we ask that this person be brought in to HECDA in the first instance by the parent so that the HECDA team can positively identify them.

Children may not be picked up by anyone under 18 years of age.

Parents should be aware that staff will NOT be responsible for supervising or ensuring the safety of children prior to arriving or after departing HECDA.

Transportation:

We offer transportation to and from public school each day. A transportation authorization form must be completed for each child requiring transport. The transportation fee is a flat fee, meaning there are no refunds for days missed. For security reasons, we require parent to inform HECDA by 1:00pm if your child will not be picked up by our bus service. Children must follow the bus rules: buckle up, stay seated and use quiet voices. Children who do not follow the bus rules and have repeated incidents of inappropriate behavior on the bus will not be offered bus service. The safety and well-being of all children will not be compromised.

Illness and Exclusion Procedures:

Children who are ill will NOT be accepted at HECDA. Children who become ill during the day will be sent home. In all cases, HECDA reserves the right to send home a child with suspicious or prolonged symptoms. It will be the responsibility of the Teacher (and in her absence, the Director) to make that determination, based on his/her best judgment. When a child is absent due to illness, the parent is asked to notify HECDA as early as possible in the morning. HECDA may request a "return to school" form from a doctor before the child will be re-admitted to HECDA.

HECDA requires that a child be sent home if any of the following occurs:

- Temperature of 100.4 or higher orally, 101.4 or higher rectally or a armpit temperature of 99.4 or higher
- Questionable rash
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Reddened and/or runny eyes
- Any communicable diseases (Measles, Mumps, Rubella, etc.)
- Any serious injury

Medication Policy:

HECDA may dispense prescription or non-prescription medication only if the parents have completed a "HECDA Medical Release" authorization form and only **upon written order of a licensed physician**. Prescription and non-prescription (over the counter - OTC) medication may be given only upon written order of a physician stating that the child care provider may administer the medication and specifying the circumstances, if any, under which the medication must not be administered, accompanied by written instructions and authorization from the parent.

Oral medications will be administered by the Director or Assistant Director ONLY.

Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's complete name, medication name, recommended dosage, time intervals for administration, method of administration, expiration date, and prescribed name and license number. Medication will be stored per the instructions on the label, kept beyond the reach of children, and returned to the parent when no longer needed.

Over-the-counter, non-prescription medication may be given only upon written order of a physician stating that the child care provider may administer the medication and specifying the circumstances, if any, under which the medication must not be administered. OTC medication may be given on an infrequent, non-routine basis, under written instruction and authorization from the parent, provided that the

instructions are consistent with the directions on the manufacturer's label. Medications must clearly state for use by "infants" or "children" on the label. Adult oral medication will not be administered under any circumstances. All medications must be in the original manufacturer's container with label. Topical ointments may be applied by staff as needed for sun screen or diaper rash, under written instruction and authorization from the parent.

"Medication Authorization" forms can be obtained from the Office Manager or Director. These forms will be maintained in the child's enrollment and history folder.

Procedures for Parental Notifications:

Notifications will be placed in each child's mailbox for parental/caregiver pick-up. In addition, current notifications will be posted in our main entrance and on the HECDA website www.hecda.com. HECDA will notify each parent in writing of any changes or addendums in HECDA policy or procedures. Notifications will also be posted on the HECDA website.

Discipline and Guidance Practices:

Discipline of children shall primarily be the responsibility of core classroom staff in accordance with the individual child's age, stage of development, and the knowledge that the teacher has of the child's needs.

Disciplinary methods used shall be based on guidance to help the child develop inner control, self-responsibility, respect for the rights of others, as he/she learns to cope with the daily experiences of living and working and playing with others. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BE USED OR TOLERATED BY ANYONE AT HECDA. Verbal abuse will not be allowed-this means no yelling, no obscene language and no put downs between adults and children. Spanking, threatening, and withholding food cannot be used to discipline children.

In helping to direct the child toward self-discipline, the following guidance techniques are used:

- Positive statements are used in giving direction to behavior.
- Redirection is consistent with the child's needs.
- The child is given opportunities to make choices and solve problems.
- Suggestions are given in time to prevent conflicts.
- Comparisons of children are avoided.
- Unacceptable behavior is clearly explained and the child is told what is acceptable. Approval of acceptable behavior is clearly expressed.

Time-Out:

Time-out is a technique that will be used sparingly and carefully. It will be used primarily when children hurt or could potentially hurt others or themselves. Aggressive behavior needs to be stopped as quickly as possible, and time-out is often, but not always, the best method for doing so. Time-out will only be used when a child has repeated the aggressive behavior more than twice and the teacher has already explained to the child that such behavior is not acceptable. Time-out will be one minute per year of age of the child.

Biting Policy:

When biting occurs, these immediate steps will taken:

- Separate the child who bit and the bitten child.
- Staff will say to the child who bit, "No, biting hurts!" or "People are not for biting." "I cannot let you hurt other people like that." The staff will use his/her tone of voice and facial expression to show the child biting is unacceptable.
- Staff will attend to the child who was bitten, will apply first aid as needed. If skin is broken staff will wash with warm water and soap. And will apply ice pack or cool cloth to help prevent swelling.

- Another staff member will keep an eye on the child who bit to prevent the child repeating the behavior.
- If appropriate, staff will have biter help assist the bitten child.
- After a couple of minutes, staff will go to the child who bit and get him involved in an activity.
- Depending on the biters age, staff may encourage restitution, e.g. an apology, efforts to cheer the bitten child.

Follow-up steps include:

- See that tetanus immunizations are current on the child who was bitten
- Document the incident.
- Notify the parents/caregivers of both children

The child who repeatedly bites:

Repeated biting behavior, regardless of child's age and developmental stage, will not be tolerated at HECDA. Children with three (3) instances of biting will be removed from the program.

Injury & Accidents:

In the case of an injury or accident occurring at HECDA, the Director will contact the parent/guardian immediately. First Aid treatment will be administered by the staff and the child will be cared for until the parent/guardian arrives. If the injury or accident is critical, 911 Emergency Services and the parent will be contacted immediately. First aid and/or CPR will be administered as needed. The physician listed on the child's record will be contacted. The Texas Child Care Licensing office will be notified of all injuries and accidents. Injury and accident records will also be maintained in HECDA administration office.

Meals & Food Service Practices:

HECDA will offer nutritious, balanced meals, including breakfast, lunch, snack and late-afternoon snack. Breakfast will be served from 7:00am to 7:45am. Lunch will be served from 11:00am to 12:00pm. Afternoon snack will be served from 2:30pm to 3:00pm. Late-afternoon snack will be served at 6:00pm. 2% milk will be served at breakfast and lunch. 100% juice may be served with snacks. Weekly menus will be posted in the main entrance and in the cafeteria. All meals and food service practices will be in accordance with the Texas Department of Health and Texas Child Care Licensing Regulations. HECDA participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program through the Texas Department of Health & Human Services, which meet all federal recommended daily nutritional standards. All parents/guardians are requested to fill out a Child Food Program Eligibility Application form annually in order for the Center to maintain state compliance.

Parents must provide formula, and baby food for their infants. Formula must be prepared at home and brought in ready to serve. Bottles and sip cups must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name in permanent marker. ***Parents are also required to fill out an infant feeding schedule before the first day of care. Infants will not be fed table food before their first birthday.***

Children who are on special diets that are prescribed by the child's physician will be accommodated within our food program. ***Parents are not to send food or drink in for or with their children.*** The only exception will be soy milk as a substitution for milk. Parents must have a Physician or Dietitian substantiate the need for a special diet in writing. Notes from Physicians are also needed to substantiate food allergies.

If your child will not be present for breakfast, please notify the center. Breakfast is served from 7:00am – 7:45am. **Breakfast will not be served after 7:45am.** If children are not here before 10:00 a.m., they will not be included in the lunch count. Please call to inform us of their late arrival before 10:00 a.m. Lunch is served between 11:00 & 12:00; snacks are served from 2:30 to 3:00 pm and at 6:00pm.

Daily Rest Periods:

Nap time is from 12:00 to 2:00pm. Parents will be required to provide mats and blankets for their children. The blanket should be picked up every Friday afternoon to be laundered and brought back to the center on Monday mornings. Please label your child's blanket and all personal items with his/her name or initials.

Children who cannot sleep will be allowed to participate in a quiet activity until the nap-time is over. Infants and toddlers who sleep in cribs will be taken out of the crib for other activities when they awake.

Health Records & Immunization Requirements:

All children are required to have a health statement on file upon admission to HECDA. Parents must complete a health statement and provide current immunization records for each child, completed and signed by a licensed physician. Parents are responsible for continuing to meet applicable child immunization requirements, including boosters, specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services. A Tuberculosis (TB) test and Hearing & Vision screening are also required for children ages 4 and up. Parents must comply with all HECDA health requirements as outlined by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Children who do not meet these requirements may be subject to dismissal from HECDA.

There is a sanitation procedure for each classroom and the infant room, and each room is disinfected three times per day.

All children and staff must wash hands after restroom breaks.

Safety:

HECDA will have a monthly fire drill to acquaint your child with our evacuation procedures. A copy of evacuation procedures will be made available to parents.

Field Trips:

Field trips will be taken periodically to nearby places and are considered an important part of our curriculum. The same responsible adult supervision will be provided for those excursions as are available to the children while in attendance at the HECDA. Parents will be notified in advance of all field trips and a separate permission form must be signed prior to the trip. In the event your child will not be attending a field trip, the child must be picked up prior to the scheduled time of the field trip. The entire class staff is needed on the trip to ensure proper supervision and safety of the class during the trip. Children are strongly encouraged to wear sneakers on all field trips. Toys, electronic devices, games, and other such items are not allowed on trips. HECDA will not be held liable for any lost, damaged, or stolen items on field trips. A field trip fee may apply.

Regulation of Day Care Operations:

HECDA operates in accordance with the Minimum Standards of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. HECDA licensing inspections will be posted on the parent information board in the main entrance. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available at the parent's center. The Licensing Department can be reached at the following numbers:

Local Childcare Licensing: 713-940-3009 or www.dfps.state.tx.us

Local Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Parental Involvement:

Parents and grandparents are encouraged to participate in all aspects of their child's learning and development at HECDA. Parents are invited to attend field trips, visit at any time during the day and provide feedback and suggestions. No appointment is necessary; however we would appreciate advance notice. We are committed to continuously improving the quality of our child care. We want to partner with you to provide the best experience possible for your child. Twice a year, HECDA will host parent-teacher functions, as a way to demonstrate and foster open communication among parents and providers.

Other Items:**Inclement Weather:**

During periods of inclement weather, HECDA will follow school closings or delays in accordance with the Spring School District. HECDA reserves the right to close or not open if travel is extremely hazardous. Late openings and closings will be posted on our website www.hecda.com. Parents may also call 281-444-KIDS (5437), for updated instructional messages on HECDA's message line.

Personal Belongings:

Children will receive their own cubby space or box for their individual belongings and parental notifications. We strongly discourage any toys or personal items brought from home, as they tend to break or become lost. HECDA is not responsible for any personal items from home that may break or become lost.

Clothing:

Children should dress in simple and washable clothing, in accordance with the uniform policy. Appropriate clothing will aid the child in their toileting and outdoor play. All walking children must wear shoes every day.

Infant & Toddler Supplies:

Parents should provide at least eight diapers per day for infants and four diapers per day for toddlers. Wipes should be replenished weekly. There will be a \$3.50 charge for wipes if HECDA needs to replenish your supply, and a \$1.00 charge for each diaper that is used for your child. A Infant Supply List will be provided for parents of infants. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain their child's supplies weekly.

Birthday Parties:

Birthday Parties will be accommodated at snack time or lunch time. Cakes or Cupcakes must be store-bought and in the original, sealed container.

Gang-Free Zone

HECDA informs parents that under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty. Also HECDA reserves the right to refuse service to any family whereas any family member or responsible party to a child is suspected to be involved in organized criminal or "gang" activity.

Contact Information

281-444-5437 – Office

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You can also find us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/Houston.Childcare